IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-26. (Canceled)

Claim 27. (New) A method for determining seroconversion in a human infected with hepatitis C virus, comprising: (i) incubating a sample taken from said human, said incubating being carried out under reducing conditions with at least one polypeptide, the amino acid sequence of which is found in hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, to determine binding of a hepatitis C virus specific antibody to said at least one polypeptide, and (ii) comparing results from (i) to results obtained at a previous point in time from said human which were negative for presence of HCV antibody, wherein a difference in (i) as compared to results obtained from said human at previous point in time which were negative is indicative of seroconversion.

Claim 28. (New) A method for determining seroconversion in a human subject infected with hepatitis C virus, comprising: (i) incubating a sample taken from said subject, with a first solid phase bound polypeptide, and a second, labeled polypeptide which is in solution, wherein the amino acid sequence of said first and second polypeptides are found in hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, said incubation being carried out under reducing conditions, to determine binding of a hepatitis C virus specific antibody to both of said first and second polypeptides, and (ii) comparing results from (i) to results obtained at a previous point in time from said subject which were negative for presence of antibodies to hepatitis C virus protein.

Claim 29. (New) A method for determining hepatitis C virus specific seroconversion antibodies, comprising incubating a human sample suspected to be a seroconversion sample containing hepatitis C virus specific antibodies taken from a subject under reducing conditions which prevent formation of covalent,

cross linked molecular aggregates with at least one polypeptide consisting of an amino acid sequence found in hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, which is immunologically reactive with said hepatitis C virus specific seroconversion antibodies, and determining binding of said antibodies to said polypeptide to recognize seroconversion in said subject.

Claim 30. (New) A method for recognition of hepatitis C virus seroconversion, comprising: incubating a human sample suspected to be a seroconversion sample containing hepatitis C virus specific seroconversion antibodies taken from a subject, under reducing conditions which prevent formation of covalent, cross linked molecular aggregates with at least one polypeptide consisting of an amino acid sequence found in hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, which is immunologically reactive with said hepatitis C virus specific seroconversion antibodies, and determining binding of said antibodies to said polypeptide to recognize seroconversion in said subject.